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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000533

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: BUSINESS OWNERS TARGETED BY MILITARY

REF: CONAKRY 00500

Classified By: ECONOFF BRIANA WARNER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Long-time Embassy contact Hadja Binta Balde, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) director in Guinea, told Econoff that she has recently become the target of extensive military harassment. According to Balde, several unnamed persons began threatening her immediately after Embassy Conakry issued a press release on August 20 against a CNDD decision to delay elections (reftel).

¶2. (C) Allegedly, Balde received two anonymous phone calls within hours of the CNDD's counter-communicue, issued on August 22. The first caller accused Balde of being a "double agent" for the U.S. government and threatened her. The next call, two hours after the first, reiterated the same message and informed Balde that her safety was in jeopardy due to her involvement with the Embassy.

¶3. (C) According to Balde, a military convoy of pick-up trucks arrived at her house three days later. Balde, afraid for her family, apparently hid in a back room and asked her guards to block the entrance to her house. After a short dispute with the guards, the convoy left her property.

¶4. (C) The next day, another military convoy came to her aunt's house, directly across the street from Balde's. The convoy allegedly injured the guards and broke in to the property. According to Balde, the uniformed men took most of the valuables from the house while the residents watched.

¶5. (C) Balde received two subsequent anonymous calls threatening her personal security. On Wednesday, Balde came to the Embassy to inform EconOff of the harassment. She noted that she has stopped answering calls from unknown numbers and has tried to maintain a low profile. Balde said that she thinks that she is being harassed as a result of her close relationship with the U.S. Embassy and because of her money.

¶6. (C) Two other Guinean business contacts reported alleged military harassment to EconOff in the past two weeks. In both cases, the businessmen received anonymous phone calls demanding their support for Dadis. According to them, the CNDD is trying to win their support through harassment.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: The CNDD may be targeting Balde because of her association with the Embassy, but it is more likely that it is because of her perceived economic influence. The military may be harassing business people both because they need support from economic leaders, and because they are

attractive targets. It may also be a sign of desperation on the part of the CNDD, as they are resorting to arrests and harassment to garner support and intimidate dissent. Such harassment has not been limited to economic contacts as political leaders and social activists have also been targeted in recent weeks.

BROKENSHIRE